DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 390 772 SO 025 649

AUTHOR Gallimore, Tim
TITLE Mass Media in Transition in Hungary and Poland. Fulbright Seminars Abroad Program.
INSTITUTION Center for International Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 10p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Developing Nations; Development; *European History; Foreign Countries; Foreign Culture; *Journalism; *Mass Media; National Programs; Secondary Education; Social Studies; Western Civilization
IDENTIFIERS Europe (East); *Hungary; *Poland

ABSTRACT

These materials were developed by a participant in the Fulbright Summer Seminar to Poland and Hungary. The materials provide information for teaching about comparative media systems. The following information is included: (1) general characteristics of media in Eastern Europe; (2) role of the Catholic Church in media and political life; (3) media laws; (4) journalism education; and (5) ethnic minorities and the mass media. The last two sections focus on an examination of the media in Poland and the media in Hungary. (EH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 390 772

"MASS MEDIA IN TRANSITION IN HUNGARY AND POLAND"

A Project Report by
Tim Gallimore
University of Missouri
School of Journalism
1994 Fulbright Seminars Abroad Program

The following is information for teaching a unit on the mass media in Eastern Europe using Hungary and Poland as the focus. The unit was developed as part of a course on comparative media systems. A number of criteria for evaluating and comparing the world's media systems have been developed. Among them are the geo-political and economic conditions in a country, the normative press theory in operation, national communication policy, mass media laws and regulations, training and professionalization of journalists; ownership and financing of media outlets; religion; availability of communication technology; and editorial content.

Using these criteria, students are able to categorize and evaluate the state and status of the mass media in Eastern Europe and to compare them to media in other regions of the world.

General Characteristics of Media in Eastern Europe

Bookstores and book stands predominate the landscape in Hungary and Poland. The city streets, kiosks, and the Budapest subway stations are lined with book mongers peddling popular novels, trash novels, poems, and histories. Texts about computers, marketing and English-language books are very popular. But despite the proliferation of the printed press in this part of the world, the traditional mass media are now in a period of contraction. Several trends in this pattern of contraction are quite visible.

1. The explosion of new newspapers and magazines that followed the end of communism and opening of the gates of free expression has fizzled. Hungary had up to 600 new papers in the first 18 months of freedom now only 12 dailies are in Budapest and another 20 scattered around the country. Poland saw a similar demise of its new publications.

2. Falling circulations of all publications has already been detected. Readers seem to be loosing interest in newspapers as television and radio broadcasting become increasingly available. Several factors contribute to this fall in circulation including: the decrease in disposable income, disillusionment with politics and the press, decrease in the sense of personal effectiveness, and general unwillingness to get involved in public affairs.

3. Globalization and foreign ownership/investment in the national media have reached astounding proportions.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Bertelsmann AG, the German media company, is the main shark devouring newspapers and magazines in Eastern Europe.
- Billboards proliferate advertising Western products.
- Western pornography is widely available.
- German slick magazines are making inroads with young readers
- European versions of USA Today
- CNN and ABC European news services are available via satellite and many people have private dishes to receive these signals.
- German, French and Russian TV channels are also available.

4. The English-language press is growing in size and influence with many American tourists, expatriots, government workers, and employees of joint-venture companies reading newspapers. Among these English papers are: "The Budapest Sun," "The Budapest Week," "The Warsaw Voice," and "Business Promotion."

5. The old Communist Party papers now the largest and most professional papers available. Some of them have new names and slogan but the same staff and managers.

6. The editorial content of the media in Eastern Europe might be characterized as a journalism of polemics from a partisan press. There are some notable exceptions such as The "Hungarian Orange" and "NIE" (NO) which represent a capitalist cynicism. Some enterprising publishers have found it profitable to criticize and poke fun at the government and society. They are irreverent in pointing out hypocrisy and corruption in the changing order but offer no solutions. Consumer and business magazines are now developing as the market economies of these countries mature and grow.

7. Corresponding to economic growth is an increasing presence of advertising in the print media. All of the major multi-national advertising agencies are established in the market. There are also advertising campaigns promoting advertising and its benefits to the consumer and the economic system.

8. State-run news agencies continue as does state-run broadcasting. There has been considerable in-fighting between political parties, presidents and parliaments over who should control the apparatus of state broadcasting. At the same time, privatization of radio and television frequencies has begun. The development of western-style FM music service is the emerging trend. The Hungarian TV service will keep one channel and privatize the other.

Role of the Catholic Church in Media and Political life

The separation of church and state is not as pronounced or important in Eastern Europe as it is in the United States. In both Hungary and Poland, the Catholic Church is a major force in daily life, in national politics and in the operation of the media. The church recently received one of four licenses granted for developing national radio networks in Poland. The Catholic weekly in Poland remained relatively free of government control and influence even under Communism. The Catholic press was an avenue of

expressing opposition to communist rule and served as a source of national pride, identity and Polish autonomy during occupation. The church either owns or subsidizes print and broadcast outlets in the Polish transition media.

Media Laws

New constitutions being debated in Hungary and Poland, as in most countries of Eastern Europe. As a result of this protracted debate, drafts of the national media laws have been stalled in the parliaments. These laws will form the national information and broadcasting policies outlining the extent of freedom of the media and punishments for infractions such as libel. They will also direct the building of the communications infrastructure and the privatization of the media that is now going on in an ad hoc fashion. The Coalition Agreement among the ruling parties in Hungary has a section on the media. Absent an approved constitution, this agreement will govern media operations, especially broadcasting.

There are some regulations in place to aid journalists in their daily duties. The Hungarian press has legal access to city council meetings and records. However, business secrets and government secrets are kept from disclosure. In May 1994, a Polish comprehensive copyright law went into effect covering intellectual property and media products. The law has provisions for stiff fines and a 3-year jail term for violators.

Journalism Education

Under the former Communist system, journalism was taught as a propaganda tool for maintaining the state. Because of this function of journalism under the old system, journalistic training was housed in the political science departments of most colleges and universities that undertook such instruction. During this transition period in Eastern Europe, journalism education is following two paths. One is a continuation of instruction in the university structure where many professors have been purged. Warsaw University and Jagiellonian University in Poland are continuing this training tradition. Unfortunately, these departments have not been re-organized to remove journalism training from the political science venue. As a result, there is little credibility granted to these training institutions by the general public and the evolving free media that abhor these former communist propaganda training grounds.

The second path of journalism education is developing around independent training institutes set up by private individuals, media organizations and western universities. This has been a successful model for training new journalists and for providing continuing education for working journalists in Prague and Bratislava. Such a Center for Independent Journalists is proposed for establishment in Krakow, Poland with the help of the University of Missouri.

The University of Maryland operates an American Journalism Center in Budapest. The center is funded by the International Media Fund. Most Hungarian journalists are young and it will therefore take some time for those journalism students with western training to replace them in the media. There are not enough openings in the media to absorb the trainees from the many private places of instruction in Hungary. Graduates of the American center want to go into corporate communication and want to learn how to manipulate the media.

Ethnic Minorities and the Mass Media

Gypsies make up the largest minority group in Eastern Europe. But Germans, Slovaks, Hungarians, Poles, and Russians are at times in the ethnic minority outside their native countries. The protection of minority rights has taken on great importance as a social issue. The region is now debating and developing a reciprocity policy for the treatment of ethnic minorities. The policy is aimed at protecting the rights of national minorities in each central European country by requiring similar treatment of minorities in the respective countries.

Most countries in Eastern Europe have made provisions for the ethnic minority populations to have access to the mass media. This is done either in the form of subsidies to media outlets operated by minorities or by setting aside time and space in mainstream media to carry news and information of interest to minorities. Cultural programing is often available in the language of the minority group members. In Hungary, Duna TV is aimed at Magyar speakers in neighboring countries.

MEDIA IN POLAND

Poland is the largest central European nation with 120,525 square miles or about the size of New Mexico.
39 million population with 4% ethnic minority groups
3 to 5 million ethnic Poles live in the former Soviet Union
16% unemployment exists (3 million)
30% annual inflation
20% of 1993 budget went to pension fund
98% literacy rate
$1,690 GNP per capita

Poland is a Catholic nation and defender of western Christian civilization. Poles see themselves as the chosen of God to suffer and serve as a sacrifice to preserve Christianity from the pagan East. The Catholic church was an institution of opposition to Socialism and it preserved cultural life and some Polish autonomy.

Poland has 200 political parties and 60-40% voter participation

Individual rights are still governed by a chapter of the old Communist constitution. Criticism of national leaders is punishable.

Print Media

Poland has 45 dailies; Warsaw has 6 dailies
The Catholic church owns several newspapers
In 1992 foreign capital invaded the Polish press. Hersant, the French media company, bought 49% of the weekly Polityka and 50% of the weeklies outside of Warsaw.
20 million copies of weeklies are sold by the Germans.
The Swiss are also in the market as a cover for Bertelsmann AG.
Norwegians have a 26% share of regionals.
The Italians also have significant investments in Polish media.
Cox Enterprises, the U.S.company, has 12.5% of Gazetta Wyborcza.
Tina, a German slick magazine, sells 3 million copies a month.
Cheaper foreign magazines are driving domestic quality publications out of business.
Local news is lacking in publications and regional dailies have the highest readership. People are tired of politics and national news and are reading slick magazines and how-to-information.
A Polish version of Readers Digest is now in publication.

Broadcasting

"CNN is important to peace in Europe by showing the ravages of war and the advantages of getting rich and enjoying western consumption."

There are 4 national government radio networks. Two channels carry news. A 5th stations is for Poles living abroad. There are 17 regional radio stations with 2 1/2 hours of daily news.

There are 2 government-owned TV channels covering the country. A new channel, POLSAT TV, will start in Fall 1994.
State TV/Radio employs 3,000 including actors for its 1 original entertainment production, "Electra." Local advertisers pay for time at the end of programs. The Education division is a joint-venture company owned by the government with 11 local stations in the network distributing programs to schools nationwide.

There are 200 radio stations in Poland with most broadcasting western music and announcing the time. Warsaw has 6 private radio stations with 24-hour service. Licenses were just approved for 5 private stations which will cover the nation. A Catholic station is among them.

Radio ZET, the first private radio station started in 1990 during the Solidarity movement to broadcast western wire service news and American rock and rap music. There is 5 to 10 minutes of news every 1/2 hour with quizzes and competitions; interviews with politicians and cultural/artistic figures. People liked the station because of its ads and similarity to western European stations. One half of the ads come from multinationals and are produced especially for the Polish audience. There are no political ads on ZET. Politicians get free time on public radio. There is a 12 minute-per-hour limit on ads. Citizens pay a $2 monthly tax on each radio set to support public (government) radio and TV.

Professionalism/Education

Poland has an association of journalists. Approximately 50% of Polish journalists do not have journalism degrees. Many of them got into the business as replacements after the Communist crack down on Solidarity journalists who were fired overnight.

Professionalism and ethics are very low and journalists routinely take junkets and bribes. Most journalists working now were employed in the 1960s and '70s. One-half of the journalism faculty was purged after the change.

About 800 accredited journalists report on Parliament. The sessions are televised and journalists are given Parliament's documents. The public can read them in the library.

There are 850 students in the Warsaw University journalism program. Fifty percent of the courses are in theory and a 3-month internship is required. There are 80 to 90 graduates yearly for 150 openings. About 70% of the graduates go into the media. Canada is helping to provide education in advertising.

MEDIA IN HUNGARY

Hungary is about the size of Indiana, with 35,920 square miles
Hungary has a 10.5 million population; 5% (1/2 million) Gypsies
12-13% open unemployment
25% decline of GDP with the loss of the Soviet market
66% of GDP is redistributed by the state budget via taxation
36% corporate tax
40% personal income tax
10% and 25% VAT tax in force
$100 monthly average income
$700 univ. professor's monthly income
$2,780 per capita GNP
20% functional illiteracy
30% divorce rate
Hungary has the highest suicide rate in world
70% Catholics but only 10-12% practice

During Communism, there was societal moral decline and people got tired of politics and therefore are not participating in democracy. About 10% participate in politics and about 40% voted in local elections 4 years ago.

Print Media

There are 28 dailies in Hungary; 7 in Budapest
The state (Socialist Party) publishing company still controls 90% of newspaper distribution. Maxwell, Murdock, and Axle Springer were early investors in the privatized newspapers. Bertelsmann bought into the party paper, Nepszabadsag "People's Freedom," established in 1956. This is the largest circulation paper in the

market with 300,000 copies. It was recently renamed "A Socialist Daily Paper." The "Hungarian Daily" the second largest paper is owned by Bonnier, a Swedish company.

Teszt = consumer reports type magazine with ads
Hvg = early alternative "opposition" magazine
Magyar Narancs The "Hungarian Orange" = alternative paper

Broadcasting

International broadcasting has more influence on Hungarian socialization and values than domestic broadcasting. Imported films and videos are highly consumed.

CNN and British MTV are popular with Hungarians who want to learn or listen to English. ABC European/world service is available.

Three private broadcasters exist in Budapest and in west Hungary but the government wants to limit foreign investment in order to control broadcasting.

There are 3 national FM radio networks named after Hungarian heroes; 6 regional radio stations exist and they reach 80-100% of the country.

Magyar Television (MTV) operates 3 channels. The third channel was started in 1991 to air cultural programs aimed at Magyar speakers (Hungarians) in neighboring countries. Duna TV can be received by satellite in most of Europe and in North Africa.
52% watch the first channel
21% watch the 2nd channel
3% watch the 3rd (Duna TV)
24% view other programs; some cable TV available; Slovak TV is viewed for sports; French Antenna 2 and Italian (RAI) are present; German TV (ZDF) provides practical language training.

Cigarette and liquor advertising are prohibited from the printed press but the Multinational tobacco companies break the law and pay the fines. The publishers agree with the advertisers to break the law as a way to get revenues.

Journalism Professionalism/Education

The biggest barrier to media content quality is armchair journalism and a lack of investigative journalism and aggressiveness on the part of old-style journalists. They don't follow up stories.

Journalists routinely take junkets. A journalists' association exists and it is trying to maintain freedom of the press. The Association has 7,000 members but many are freelancers.

Training of journalists is done at university and via the Hungarian Journalists' Association. Private training is also being provided. About 60 programs train 1,000 students annually.

Bibliography

Bruner, Rick (1994, April). Press freedom is over. IPI Report 43(4), pp. 11-12.

Elam, Peter (1993). War by other means. Index on Censorship(7), pp. 23-24.

Goban-Klas, Thomasz (1994). The orchestration of the media: The politics of mass communications in communist Poland and the aftermath. Bolder, CO: Westview Press.

Herrmann, Peter (1993, March 10). Social goals for the media endorsed by Poles. RFE/RL Research Report 2(5), pp. 58-59.

Hersant sells Magyar Nemzet (1994, May-June). IPI Report 43(4-5) p. 19.

Hiebert, Ray (1994, January-February). The difficult birth of a free press. American Journalism Review, pp. 34-36.

Hill, Chris (1994, May-June). TV Judit and video Andras: An interview with Judit Kopper and Andras Solyom. The Humanist 54(3), pp. 9-14.

Hungarian bill on radio and television (1993). Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal 11, p. 449.

Koziara, Andrzej (1994, July 31). One tradition upheld, another overturned. The Warsaw Voice p. 3.

Kondor, Imre (1994, July 7-13). Radio, TV chiefs to be replaced. The Budapest Week, p. 5.

Nadler, John (1994, April 11). Hungary TV on verge of making waves. Variety 354(10), p. A56.

Obrman, Jan (1993, February 5). The Slovak government versus the media. RFE/RL Research Report 2(6), pp. 26-30.

Pataki, Judith (1994, May 13). Hungarian radio staff cuts cause uproar. RFE/RL Research Report 3(19), pp. 38-43.

Pehe, Jiri (1993, April 9). Czech Republic: Furor over independent radio and television. REF/RL Research Report 2(15), pp. 23-27.

Polish law governing the press (1993). Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal 11, p. 569.

Rosenberg, Tina (1994, Oct. 10). East Europe's Press Faces A Threat It Thought Was History. The New Yorker.

Sabbat-Swidlicka, Anna (1992, October 2). Poland. RFE/RL Research Report 1(39), pp. 47-52.

Sabbat-Swidlicka, Anna (1994, March 11). The travails of independent broadcasting in Poland. RFE/RL Research Report 3(10), pp. 40-50.

Traynor, Ian (1994, May-June). Propaganda backfires. IPI Report 43(4-5), p. 28.

Urban, Rob, and Zelenko, Laura (1993, March-April). Slovakia: Here comes the new boss, worse than the old boss. Columbia Journalism Review, pp. 45-47.

Vamos, Miklos (1993, December 13). Hungary's media apparatchiks. The Nation 257(20), pp. 725-729.

Wall Street Journal insert launched (1994, March 24). Facts on File 54(2782), p. 215.

Webster, David (1992). Building democracy: New broadcasting laws in East and Central Europe. Washington, D.C.: The Annenberg Washington Program in Communications Policy Studies of Northwestern University.